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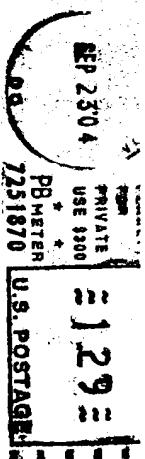
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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/982,887	10/22/2001	Gunnar Flentje		7527
7590	09/23/2004		EXAMINER	
Gunnar Flentje 1223 Wilshire Blvd #316 Los Angeles, CA 90403			JACOBSON, TONY M	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2644	
			DATE MAILED: 09/23/2004	

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

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Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/982,887	FLENTJE, GUNNAR	
	Examiner Tony M Jacobson	Art Unit 2644	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 18 May 2004.
 2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-19 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-19 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on 22 October 2001 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
 6) Other: _____.

Notice of References Cited			Application/Control No.	Applicant(s)/Patent Under Reexamination	
			09/982,887	FLENTJE, GUNNAR	
Examiner		Art Unit		2644	Page 1 of 1
U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS					

*		Document Number Country Code-Number-Kind Code	Date MM-YYYY	Name	Classification
*	A	US-4,363,934	12-1982	Scholz, Donald T.	381/109
*	B	US-5,054,076	10-1991	Lowell, Wilhelm R.	381/109
	C	US-			
	D	US-			
	E	US-			
	F	US-			
	G	US-			
	H	US-			
	I	US-			
	J	US-			
	K	US-			
	L	US-			
	M	US-			

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

*		Document Number Country Code-Number-Kind Code	Date MM-YYYY	Country	Name	Classification
	N					
	O					
	P					
	Q					
	R					
	S					
	T					

NON-PATENT DOCUMENTS

*		Include as applicable: Author, Title Date, Publisher, Edition or Volume, Pertinent Pages)
*	U	GONZALEZ, GEORGE R. Article posted to rec.audio.tubes USENET newsgroup titled "Re: use of Variacs in Guitar amps" [online], 1998-03-20 [retrieved on 2003-11-28]. retrieved from the Internet:<URL: http://groups.google.com>
	V	
	W	
	X	

*A copy of this reference is not being furnished with this Office action. (See MPEP § 707.05(a).)
Dates in MM-YYYY format are publication dates. Classifications may be US or foreign.

DETAILED ACTION

Priority

1. Applicant's claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. 119(e) is acknowledged. However, the provisional application upon which priority is claimed fails to provide adequate support under 35 U.S.C. 112 for claims 1, 8, and 14 (and therefore all dependent claims) of this application. The provisional application (serial number 60/242,228) does not support the limitation of maintaining "constant proportional quality of high frequencies in applied sound signals".

Drawings

2. The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The drawings must show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Therefore, the controller having an infinite amount of tap positions and an infinite plurality of contacts respectively coupled to the infinite multiple tap positions along a continuously-tapped coil must be shown or the feature(s) canceled from the claim(s). No new matter should be entered.

Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The figure or figure number of an amended drawing should not be labeled as "amended." If a drawing figure is to be canceled, the appropriate figure must be removed from the replacement sheet,

and where necessary, the remaining figures must be renumbered and appropriate changes made to the brief description of the several views of the drawings for consistency. Additional replacement sheets may be necessary to show the renumbering of the remaining figures. The replacement sheet(s) should be labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the page header (as per 37 CFR 1.84(c)) so as not to obstruct any portion of the drawing figures. If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

4. Claims 4, 5, 11, 12, 17, and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention.

5. Claims 4, 11, and 17 recite "said controller having infinite multiple positions corresponding to an infinite amount of tap positions along said continuously tapped

coil". Although it may be said that a Variac controller (as disclosed in Applicant's specification) has infinite multiple positions; in a conventional Variac, these infinite positions do not correspond to an infinite number of tap positions, but a finite number of tap positions where a wiper contact slides along the edge of an arcuate coil, progressively making contact with each succeeding turn or group of turns of the coil. If Applicant has invented a new type of Variac with an infinite number of tap positions, it must be disclosed in such a way as to enable one of ordinary skill in the art to make and use the invention.

6. Claims 5, 12, and 18 recite "wherein said controller has an infinite plurality of contacts, respectively coupled to the infinite multiple tap positions along said continuously tapped coil". Applicant has not disclosed a controller having an infinite plurality of contacts in such a way as to enable one of ordinary skill in the art to make and use the invention.

7. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

8. Claims 4 and 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

9. Claim 4 recites the limitation "said first and second parts of said variable frequency-sensitive second impedance means" in lines 11-13 of the claim. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. Neither claim 4 nor claim 1 upon which it depends makes any prior mention of first and second parts of the variable frequency-sensitive second impedance means.

10. Claim 7 recites the limitation "said second variable frequency-sensitive impedance means" in lines 2-3 of the claim. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. Neither claim 7 nor claim 1 make any prior mention of a second variable frequency-sensitive impedance means. For examination purposes, it will be assumed that Applicant intended to recite "said variable frequency-sensitive second impedance means".

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

11. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

12. Claims 1-3, 6-10, 13-16, and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Scholz (US 4,363,934) in view of Lowell (US 5,054,076).

13. Because Applicant has not indicated any amendment to the claims, it is assumed that the original claims remain pending. Those claims accordingly remain rejected on the grounds presented in the previous Office action.

14. Claims 4, 5, 11, 12, 17, and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Scholz (US 4,363,934) in view of Lowell (US 5,054,076) as applied to claims 1, 8, and 14 above, and further in view of Gonzalez (Reference U) as set forth in the prior Office action.

Response to Amendment

15. The amendment to the specification filed 22 April 2004 has been entered; however, it does not conform to 37 CFR 1.121 because: the use of single square brackets to indicate deleted text in the replacement paragraph does not comply with 37 CFR 1.121(b)(1)(ii), which requires deleted matter to be indicated by strike-through, except that double brackets placed before and after the deleted characters may be used to show deletion of **five or fewer consecutive characters**. Any subsequent amendment must conform to 37 CFR 1.121 or the applicable section of 37 CFR to be allowed entry.

Response to Arguments

16. Applicant's arguments filed 18 May 2004 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

17. The examiner agrees with Applicant that a correct technical definition of a regular variac is "a device having a controller having infinite multiple positions corresponding to a finite amount of tap positions along a continuously tapped coil". The examiner erred in reciting at page 10, paragraph 19, lines 10-15 that Gonzalez discloses a variac having "... infinite multiple positions corresponding to an infinite amount of tap positions along the continuously tapped coil ..." (as claimed by Applicant). The examiner intended to recite "... a finite amount of tap positions ..."; however, since this limitation was also rejected under 35 USC § 112, first paragraph as not being enabled by the disclosure, the error is substantially irrelevant.

18. Many of Applicant's arguments fail to comply with 37 CFR 1.111(b) because they amount to a general allegation that the claims define a patentable invention without specifically pointing out how the language of the claims patentably distinguishes them from the references.

19. Regarding Applicant's argument that "If a combination of the elements shown in the references Scholz, Lowell and Gonzalez would have been obvious to the ones skilled in the art, such a combination would then have been made already by those skilled in the art because it solves two major problems that occur in this technology and are not solved by the state of the art at present", this is not the standard by which obviousness is judged. If such a combination had already been made, the present claims would have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by such construction. (See statement of statutory basis for 35 U.S.C. 103(a) rejections, above.)

20. Regarding Applicant's argument that "Prior art has not been able to provide continuous dial", this feature is disclosed by Gonzalez, which, combined with the teachings of Scholz and Lowell, leads to the instant invention.

21. Regarding Applicant's argument that "Prior art teaches away from combination of Scholz, Lowell and Gonzalez", the examiner finds nothing within these references teaching away from the current invention; there is no teaching in Scholz that an autotransformer could not be substituted for the resistive voltage divider (R1, R0, and R2) of Fig. 1 (in fact, the use of the general term "impedance means" throughout the disclosure and in the claims to refer to the tapped voltage divider suggests that impedance elements consisting of other than resistors is contemplated), nor that a continuously-adjustable impedance means could not be used; Lowell discloses no teaching that a continuously-adjustable autotransformer (variac) could not be used in

place of the discretely-adjustable autotransformer of Fig. 2; Lowell does not teach that a load resistance (such as RB of Scholz Fig. 1) could not be connected between point 100 and point 32 in the circuit of Fig. 2; and Gonzalez does not teach that a load resistor could not be similarly connected to a continuously-adjustable autotransformer (variac) in the same manner. In fact, from Gonzalez's warning, "don't turn the variac all the way down as this effectively disconnects the speakers, which is bad news for some amps", one of ordinary skill in the art would be motivated to seek means to maintain a suitable load impedance over a full range of variac settings, such as adding a resistor such as RB of Fig. 2 of Scholz in view of the well-known fact that medium- and high-power tube amplifiers require a load impedance that approximates a predetermined value to prevent damage to the output circuitry of the amplifier. Moreover, other prior art not relied upon for the rejections made above that may teach away from the combination recited in the rejections is not relevant to the analysis of the obviousness of combining the teachings of the references cited.

22. In response to applicant's arguments against the references individually, one cannot show nonobviousness by attacking references individually where the rejections are based on combinations of references. See *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 208 USPQ 871 (CCPA 1981); *In re Merck & Co.*, 800 F.2d 1091, 231 USPQ 375 (Fed. Cir. 1986). Thus, although the apparatus of Gonzales may not provide "constant frequencies" or constant impedance and Lowell may not provide constant impedance, the combinations recited in the present rejections of the instant claims do provide these

features.

23. Regarding Applicant's argument that Scholz does not provide constant frequencies, whereas the examiner stated at page 6, lines 1-3 of the prior Office action that Scholz inherently maintains constant proportional quality of high frequencies in applied signals, assuming a reasonably-low output impedance of the source amplifier in Fig. 1 of Scholz, the proportion of high frequencies in ***applied sound signals*** (i.e., the signals at the input to the circuit) would be maintained substantially constant, as claimed. Regardless, in the combination recited in the rejections, based on the combined teachings of Scholz, Lowell, and Gonzalez, the structure is the same as that claimed; and the limitation would be met by that structure to the same extent that Applicant's disclosure has enabled this functional limitation.

24. Regarding Applicant's argument that the combination of Scholz and Lowell would lead to an exclusively inductive circuit and therefore could not maintain constant proportional quality of high frequencies, the examiner has not suggested such a combination. The combination suggested by the examiner in the rejections is a resistor connected as RB in Fig. 1 of Scholz, with the tapped resistive voltage divider consisting of R1, R0, and R2 replaced by an autotransformer or variac as taught by Lowell and Gonzalez, or stated alternatively, by adding the resistor RB of Scholz to the autotransformer attenuators of Lowell or Gonzalez to maintain a constant load

impedance to the source as taught by Scholz at column 3, lines 48-50.

25. In response to applicant's argument that the combination of references cited in the rejections is "[n]ot a suggested modification of Scholz" because "there is no suggestion in the prior art to modify this particular circuit in a radical manner", the test for obviousness is not whether the features of a secondary reference may be bodily incorporated into the structure of the primary reference; nor is it that the claimed invention must be expressly suggested in any one or all of the references. Rather, the test is what the combined teachings of the references would have suggested to those of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Keller*, 642 F.2d 413, 208 USPQ 871 (CCPA 1981).

26. In response to applicant's argument that the references fail to show certain features of applicant's invention, it is noted that the features upon which applicant relies (i.e., an inductive resistance Z0 that is a good approximation to loudspeaker ZS and first impedance means R1 that is substantially larger than the inductive resistance Z0) are not recited in the rejected claim(s). Although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993). Moreover, upon consideration of combining the teachings of Scholz, Lowell, and Gonzalez as cited in the rejections, one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that impedance requirements for an autotransformer circuit are vastly different from those of a resistive voltage divider feeding a heavy load, and would select different component values

(including impedance) accordingly. Such component selection was well within the abilities of one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the present invention was made.

Conclusion

27. Although Applicant requests the examiner to draft exemplary allowable claims according to MPEP 707.07(j), the examiner does not see allowable subject matter in the present disclosure; and thus is unable to provide such claims.

28. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

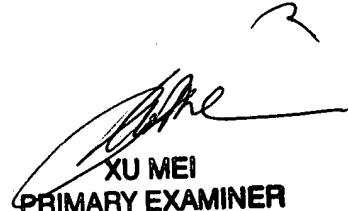
A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Tony M Jacobson whose telephone number is 703-305-5532. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 11:00-7:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Forester W Isen can be reached on 703-305-4386. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

tmj
September 8, 2004



XU MEI
PRIMARY EXAMINER

USPTO TO PROVIDE ELECTRONIC ACCESS TO CITED U.S. PATENT REFERENCES WITH OFFICE ACTIONS AND CEASE SUPPLYING PAPER COPIES

In support of its 21st Century Strategic Plan goal of increased patent e-Government, beginning in June 2004, the United States Patent and Trademark Office (Office or USPTO) will begin the phase-in of its E-Patent Reference program and hence will: (1) **provide downloading capability of the U.S. patents and U.S. patent application publications cited in Office actions** via the E-Patent Reference feature of the Office's Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system; and (2) **cease mailing paper copies of U.S. patents and U.S. patent application publications with Office actions** (in applications and during reexamination proceedings) except for citations made during the international stage of an international application under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT). In order to use the new E-Patent Reference feature applicants must: (1) obtain a digital certificate and software from the Office; (2) obtain a customer number from the Office; and (3) properly associate patent applications with the customer number. Alternatively, copies of all U.S. patents and patent application publications can be accessed without a digital certificate from the USPTO web site, from the USPTO Office of Public Records, and from commercial sources. The Office will continue the practice of supplying paper copies of foreign patent documents and non-patent literature with Office actions. Paper copies of cited references will continue to be provided by the USPTO for international applications during the international stage.

Schedule

June 2004	TCs 1600, 1700, 2800 and 2900
July 2004	TCs 3600 and 3700
August 2004	TCs 2100 and 2600

All U.S. patents and U.S. patent application publications are available on the USPTO web site. However, a simple system for downloading the cited U.S. patents and patent application publications has been established for applicants, called the E-Patent Reference system. As E-Patent Reference and Private PAIR require participating applicants to have a customer number, retrieval software and a digital certificate, all applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the Patent Electronic Business Center to acquire these items. To be ready to use this system by June 1, 2004, contact the Patent EBC as soon as possible by phone at 866-217-9197 (toll-free), 703-305-3028 or 703-308-6845 or electronically via the Internet at ebc@uspto.gov.

Other Options

The E-Patent Reference function requires the applicant to use the secure Private PAIR system, which establishes confidential communications with the applicant. Applicants using this facility must receive a digital certificate, as described above. Other options for obtaining patents which do not require the digital certificate include the USPTO's free Patents on the Web program (<http://www.uspto.gov/patft/index.html>). The USPTO's Office of Public Records also supplies copies of patents for a fee (<http://ebiz1.uspto.gov/oems25p/index.html>). Commercial sources also provide U.S. patents and patent application publications.

For complete instructions see the Official Gazette Notice, USPTO TO PROVIDE ELECTRONIC ACCESS TO CITED U.S. PATENT REFERENCES WITH OFFICE ACTIONS AND CEASE SUPPLYING PAPER COPIES, on the USPTO web site.

NOTICE OF OFFICE PLAN TO CEASE SUPPLYING COPIES OF CITED U.S. PATENT REFERENCES WITH OFFICE ACTIONS, AND PILOT TO EVALUATE THE ALTERNATIVE OF PROVIDING ELECTRONIC ACCESS TO SUCH U.S. PATENT REFERENCES

Summary

The United States Patent and Trademark Office (Office or USPTO) plans in the near future to: (1) cease mailing copies of U.S. patents and U.S. patent application publications (US patent references) with Office actions except for citations made during the international stage of an international application under the Patent Cooperation Treaty and those made during reexamination proceedings; and (2) provide electronic access to, with convenient downloading capability of, the US patent references cited in an Office action via the Office's private Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system which has a new feature called "E-Patent Reference." Before ceasing to provide copies of U.S. patent references with Office actions, the Office shall test the feasibility of the E-Patent Reference feature by conducting a two-month pilot project starting with Office actions mailed after December 1, 2003. The Office shall evaluate the pilot project and publish the results in a notice which will be posted on the Office's web site (www.USPTO.gov) and in the Patent Official Gazette (O.G.). In order to use the new E-Patent Reference feature during the pilot period, or when the Office ceases to send copies of U.S. patent references with Office actions, the applicant must: (1) obtain a digital certificate from the Office; (2) obtain a customer number from the Office, and (3) properly associate applications with the customer number. The pilot project does not involve or affect the current Office practice of supplying paper copies of foreign patent documents and non-patent literature with Office actions. Paper copies of references will continue to be provided by the USPTO for searches and written opinions prepared by the USPTO for international applications during the international stage and for reexamination proceedings.

Description of Pilot Project to Provide Electronic Access to Cited U.S. Patent References

On December 1, 2003, the Office will make available a new feature, E-Patent Reference, in the Office's private PAIR system, to allow more convenient downloading of U.S. patents and U.S. patent application publications. The new feature will allow an authorized user of private PAIR to download some or all of the U.S. patents and U.S. patent application publications cited by an examiner on form PTO-892 in Office actions, as well as U.S. patents and U.S. patent application publications submitted by applicants on form PTO/SB08 (1449) as part of an IDS. The retrieval of some or all of the documents may be performed in one downloading step with the documents encoded as Adobe Portable Document format (.pdf) files, which is an improvement over the current page-by-page retrieval capability from other USPTO systems.

Steps to Use the New E-Patent Reference Feature During the Pilot Project and Thereafter

Access to private PAIR is required to utilize E-Patent Reference. If you don't already have access to private PAIR, the Office urges practitioners, and applicants not represented by a practitioner, to take advantage of the transition period to obtain a no-cost USPTO Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) digital certificate, obtain a USPTO customer number, associate all of their pending and new application filings with their customer number, install no-cost software (supplied by the Office) required to access private PAIR and E-Patent Reference feature, and make appropriate arrangements for Internet access. The full instructions for obtaining a PKI digital certificate are available at the Office's Electronic Business Center (EBC) web page at: [<http://www.uspto.gov/ebc/downloads.html>](http://www.uspto.gov/ebc/downloads.html). Note that a notarized signature will be required to obtain a digital certificate.

To get a Customer Number, download and complete the Customer Number Request form, PTO-SB125, at: <http://www.uspto.gov/web/forms/sb0125.pdf>. The completed form can then be transmitted by facsimile to the Electronic Business Center at (703) 308-2840, or mailed to the address on the form. If you are a registered attorney or patent agent, then your registration number must be associated with your customer number. This is accomplished by adding your registration number to the Customer Number Request form. A description of associating a customer number with an application is described at the EBC web page at: http://www.uspto.gov/ebc/registration_pair.html.

The E-Patent Reference feature will be accessed using a new button on the private PAIR screen. Ordinarily all of the cited U.S. patent and U.S. patent application publication references will be available over the Internet using the Office's new E-Patent Reference feature. The size of the references to be downloaded will be displayed by E-Patent Reference so the download time can be estimated. Applicants and registered practitioners can select to download all of the references or any combination of cited references. Selected references will be downloaded as complete documents as Adobe Portable Document Format (.pdf) files. For a limited period of time, the USPTO will include a copy of this notice with Office actions to encourage applicants to use this new feature and, if needed, to take the steps outlined above in order to be able to utilize this new feature during the pilot and thereafter.

During the two-month pilot, the Office will evaluate the stability and capacity of the E-Patent Reference feature to reliably provide electronic access to cited U.S. patent and U.S. patent application publication references. While copies of U.S. patent and U.S. patent application publication references cited by examiners will continue to be mailed with Office actions during the pilot project, applicants are encouraged to use the private PAIR and the E-Patent Reference feature to electronically access and download cited U.S. patent and U.S. patent application publication references so the Office will be able to objectively evaluate its performance. The public is encouraged to submit comments to the Office on the usability and performance of the E-Patent Reference feature during the pilot. Further, during the pilot period registered practitioners, and applicants not represented by a practitioner, are encouraged to experiment with the feature, develop a proficiency in using the feature, and establish new internal processes for using the new access to the cited U.S. patents and U.S. patent application publications to prepare for the anticipated cessation of the current Office practice of supplying copies of such cited

references. The Office plans to continue to provide access to the E-Patent Reference feature during its evaluation of the pilot.

Comments

Comments concerning the E-Patent Reference feature should be in writing and directed to the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at the USPTO by electronic mail at eReference@uspto.gov or by facsimile to (703) 308-2840. Comments will be posted and made available for public inspection. To ensure that comments are considered in the evaluation of the pilot project, comments should be submitted in writing by January 15, 2004.

Comments with respect to specific applications should be sent to the Technology Centers' customer service centers. Comments concerning digital certificates, customer numbers, and associating customer numbers with applications should be sent to the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at the USPTO by facsimile at (703) 308-2840 or by e-mail at EBC@uspto.gov.

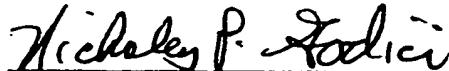
Implementation after Pilot

After the pilot, its evaluation, and publication of a subsequent notice as indicated above, the Office expects to implement its plan to cease mailing paper copies of U.S. patent references cited during examination of non provisional applications on or after February 2, 2004; although copies of cited foreign patent documents, as well as non-patent literature, will still be mailed to the applicant until such time as substantially all applications have been scanned into IFW.

For Further Information Contact

Technical information on the operation of the IFW system can be found on the USPTO website at <http://www.uspto.gov/web/patents/ifw/index.html>. Comments concerning the E-Patent Reference feature and questions concerning the operation of the PAIR system should be directed to the EBC at the USPTO at (866) 217-9197. The EBC may also be contacted by facsimile at (703) 308-2840 or by e-mail at EBC@uspto.gov.

Date. 12/1/03


Nicholas P. Godici
Commissioner for Patents